

# Queen's Park Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	136660
<b>Local authority</b>	n/a
<b>Inspection number</b>	395551
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Michael Bartleman

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	539
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fred Birkett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne McCormick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	No previous inspection
<b>School address</b>	Chestnut Avenue Bedford MK40 4HA
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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	1–2 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395551



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman Additional Inspector

Bimla Thakur Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 28 lessons for a total of 15 hours, observing 22 different teachers and early years practitioners. They held meetings with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the academy's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including data on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the academy's self-evaluation. They analysed questionnaires from 239 parents and carers, as well as those completed by staff and a sample of pupils.

## Information about the school

This is larger than the average-sized lower school. Most pupils are from Asian backgrounds; the largest groups are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. There is an increasing proportion of pupils from East European backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs) is above average. There are an increasing number of pupils who join and leave the academy during the school year. The academy covers two sites, with the Early Years Foundation Stage at Marlborough Road, which is adjacent to the Children's Centre and Community Nursery, and Year 1 to Year 4 at the Chestnut Avenue site.

The governing body manages a community nursery, for children aged from 0 to 5, which is subject to separate inspection and reporting arrangements and a breakfast club.

The school was granted academy status in April 2011. The academy has achieved National Support School status, with the headteacher being a National Leader in Education. The academy has received a number of awards, including International School Award, Inclusion Quality Mark, Investors in People and Healthy School status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Queen's Park is a good academy. Attainment is rising, pupils' progress is accelerating and attendance has improved. It is not outstanding because a few pupils do not make good year-on-year progress in writing and not enough teaching is outstanding. Parents and carers are supportive of the academy; many wrote comments referring to the academy's welcoming atmosphere.
- All groups of pupils achieve well in this inclusive academy. Most children enter the academy with skills that are low, particularly in communication, literacy and language. Pupils make good progress as they move through the academy although reading and mathematics are stronger than writing. The gap between boys' attainment and that of girls is closing rapidly.
- Pupils respond well to the good and increasingly outstanding teaching they receive. Teachers know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. Teachers' clear explanations, subject knowledge and use of interesting resources all contribute to the good progress that pupils make. The pace of learning is slower in lessons where activities are not precisely matched to pupils' needs.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Conduct around school is sensible and the behaviour of many pupils in lessons is often outstanding. Pupils and their parents and carers say that the academy is a safe and friendly place. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Attendance is now average and improving rapidly.
- Leadership and management are good. The strong and effective leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders and governing body, make a substantial impact on the academy's development, based on accurate self-evaluation. Teaching is well led and managed and staff receive highly focused professional development to enhance their skills. The outstanding curriculum has an excellent impact on the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, improve pupils' year-on-year achievement in writing to match that reached in reading and mathematics by:
  - ensuring teachers clearly show pupils the kind of writing they are expecting
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in all areas of the curriculum.
  
- By July 2013, raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - precisely matching activities to pupils' next steps in learning
  - ensuring that there is an effective balance between teacher-talk and pupils' independent activities
  - ensuring marking in all subjects provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work and opportunities to respond and learn from their mistakes.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are low for their age. Their social skills, attitudes to learning and speaking skills develop rapidly within the warm and purposeful atmosphere. Children are now achieving levels a little below those expected for their age when they enter Year 1. An increase in the amount of outstanding teaching and a greater impact of subject and year leaders are accelerating progress so that attainment is improving rapidly throughout the academy. Until recently attainment at the end of Year 4 has been low. However work in books and current assessment evidence show that pupils are on track to attain expected levels which represents good progress from their starting points.

In reading, pupils' attainment has been below average at the end of Year 2 and below expectations when pupils leave the school in Year 4. However, the impact of the academy's rigorous phonics programme (linking sounds and letters), well-structured guided-reading sessions and individual support are evident in pupils' rising attainment and enjoyment of reading. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those at an early stage of learning English, are supported well by highly skilled teaching assistants and make similar progress to other groups of pupils. This was evident in a Year 3 English lesson where pupils were able to explain clearly the main features of the beginning of a story following the class teacher's explanations. Teaching assistants effectively supported pupils

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reinforcing appropriate language while the class teacher extended and consolidated individuals' learning. In a few lessons, the pace of learning slows because teachers talk for too long and pupils do not move rapidly enough to independent tasks.

The academy works tirelessly to help individual pupils and their families to overcome specific academic and emotional barriers to their learning. This helps to minimise and close any gaps between what these pupils are achieving and what is expected of them nationally. The majority of parents and carers state that they are happy with the progress their children are making at the academy. Transition arrangements for pupils leaving and joining the academy are well developed.

### **Quality of teaching**

The inspection findings of good teaching match the academy's own assessments, the positive views of parents and carers and those of pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-supported tasks, and effective use of both the indoor and the well-developed outdoor environments. This improved provision is having a highly positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Children are fully engaged as was seen when they were taking different roles in a 'hairstylist's salon' and a 'builder's office'. Both activities developed imagination and language exceptionally well. The effective intervention by adults (when they question or suggest things while children explore through play) moves learning forward at a pace.

Teachers engage pupils' interest quickly with well-resourced introductions often using the outside environment, which make learning fun. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those early to learning English is particularly effective because language and vocabulary are reinforced by all adults at every opportunity.

Teachers know pupils and their capabilities well, but do not always set tasks which are fine-tuned to match their learning needs exactly, which slows learning. During teacher-led whole-class sessions teaching assistants do not always support quickly enough to maintain the pace of learning. Reading is taught effectively, and teachers have a good understanding of the teaching of phonics. Although the development of writing skills is improving, teachers do not routinely demonstrate for pupils exactly the kind of writing they want and sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to write at length.

Increasingly teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and have opportunities to review their success. In an outstanding Year 2 lesson on poetry pupils learnt a vast amount rapidly because of the clarity of the activities, effective discussions with partners and excellent questioning. Regular marking helps pupils to understand the quality of their work and what they have to do next to improve. However, these practices are not consistent across the academy. The planned curriculum enables teachers to make meaningful links between subjects. Pupils are encouraged to work together and to respect one another's views, which together

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with the academy's emphasis on values, effectively promotes their personal development.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are correct in their view that behaviour and safety are good. The inspectors were impressed by the good conduct they saw around school and the often outstanding behaviour in lessons. With only a very few exceptions, the pupils' commitment to, and enjoyment of, learning made a strong contribution to the effectiveness of lessons. Pupils are polite and courteous and treat each other with respect. Academy records of incidents of misbehaviour support the view that behaviour over time is good and there are effective systems to help pupils who sometimes find behaving well a challenge. Pupils have a good awareness of safety. Although a small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour and bullying, the pupils say they feel extremely safe that any cases of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. They are aware that bullying can exist in a variety of forms including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to sex, gender, race and disability. Clear guidelines and effective use of rewards help ensure that pupils know what is acceptable. The academy is a harmonious community where, as one parent put it, 'Every child feels included and valued.

Strong links with external agencies, together with staff who know their pupils as individuals and a caring ethos, help ensure that pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive the support they need. The academy has made effective links with the Children's Centre and other local providers. Attendance has improved rapidly due to the academy's concerted efforts and is now average. The breakfast club is well run, provides good pastoral care for those who attend and is appreciated by parents and carers.

## **Leadership and management**

Most staff share the headteacher's vision for the academy and work collectively with the leadership team to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. The academy's work is subject to regular and detailed scrutiny, ensuring that self-evaluation is accurate and that well-planned action leads to improvement. This is evidenced by the rising standards in English and mathematics, much-improved attendance and the extremely well-developed thematic curriculum. The governing body has an excellent knowledge of the academy and contributes to its success through its support, the challenge it provides to leaders and ensuring that statutory requirements, particularly for safeguarding, are rigorously met. For these reasons, the academy has a strong capacity to sustain improvement.

Staff receive effective guidance and performance management to help them to improve their practice. This has led to an increase in the number of outstanding lessons. Monitoring of pupils' work by leaders and direct observation of lessons ensure that effective approaches are being consolidated in all classes and inconsistencies reduced. The recently appointed subject and year leaders' prompt

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actions have started to have a positive impact on raising pupils' attainment. Staff also effectively support the headteacher in her role as a National Leader of Education. The efficient analysis of data, which recently has been enhanced by new systems, has enabled staff more effectively to tackle underachievement. Leaders and the governing body promote equality of opportunity effectively and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Parents and carers see that their children are at the heart of everything that the academy does. The academy engages well with parents and carers to ensure that they are active partners in their children's learning. The many pupils who join the academy at times other than the start of terms are quickly assessed and supported so that they make good progress and are fully integrated into the life of the academy.

The curriculum is outstanding because it is rich and varied, with an international dimension, and is continuing to develop. Well-planned enrichment activities, including whole family visits and partnerships with schools in contrasting settings in this country and beyond, give pupils an understanding of what life is like for children whose backgrounds are different from their own. Links with local businesses and visiting speakers give pupils an insight into the world of work and raise aspirations. Class visits and the academy's celebration of its own diversity help to develop pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures and have an excellent impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which promote learning and enjoyment in sporting, arts and environmental activities.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



3 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Queen's Park Academy, Bedford, MK40 4HA.**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you, reading your questionnaires and hearing what you had to say about your school. We were pleased to hear about how you enjoy everything the school has to offer you. We were impressed with how polite and friendly you are.

You go to a good school. There are many good things about your school, such as the welcoming atmosphere, your enjoyment of reading and the good progress you make across the school. Your attendance has improved a lot and is now average – well done! Your teachers look after you well and try to make your lessons fun using video clips and 'partner talk'. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers, the after-school clubs and visits.

To make sure that all of you make even better progress, we have asked your headteacher and other school leaders to do the following things.

- We want them to make your progress in writing as good as your progress in reading and mathematics. We would like to see you learning more from the way your teachers show you how to write, and doing longer pieces of writing in other subjects, not just literacy.
- We have asked teachers to keep you more interested by making sure you start work quickly and do not have to listen for too long, and by giving you work that is exactly right for your ability or need. We want marking always to give you clear guidance on how to improve, and we want you to have a chance to think about how well you have done.

You can help by continuing to behave well and trying hard in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Michael Bartleman  
Lead inspector

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